(c) A number of steps have been taken to increase tax collection which include closer monitoring of collections, plugging leakage of revenue through anti-smuggling and anti-evasion measures; expeditious disposal of tax adjudications and appeals; finalisation of provisional assessments; simplification of tax collection procedures to improve tax compliance; restructuring of the administrative setup and expediting computerisation of operations.

(d) Several of steps have been taken to widen the tax base and bring more people into the tax bracket, which include the one-by-six scheme, compulsory filing of returns by companies, focussed surveys and searches, and extending the applicability of Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) provisions to cover various taxable financial transactions.

Finalization of debt swap operation

1433. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have finalized the contours of a massive debt swap operation which is expected to lower the Central Government's current year's gross fiscal deficit by almost 1 per cent of the GDP;

(b) whether the scheme is for States to prepay Rs. 85,000 crores of high cost debt to the Central Government over three years and borrow fresh money at cheaper rates; and

(c) if so, what are the details of this plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government of India have constituted a High Powered Committee under the chairmanship of the Union Minister of Finance and Company Affairs for assessing the fiscal situation of States. The terms of reference of the committee includes, *inter-alia*, recommendations for reducing the debt burden of States to sustainable levels and to recommend a feasible debt swap mechanism to supplement the efforts of the State towards fiscal consolidation. The committee is expected to submit its report by 30th September, 2002.